



**eNews from Sen. Lisa Murkowski - Vol. 3, Issue 11: : [Visit Senator Murkowski's Web Site](#)
September 7 , 2007 [Download a Print Version](#)**

August Recess

Each August, the Senate holds a four-week recess. This offers me a great opportunity to travel back to the state to visit with Alaskans. Each August I visit with as many people as I can and to take in as much of the State that I love as possible. This year was no exception. In this edition of the eNews, allow me to share some of my experiences this year.

Secretary Spellings Travels to Alaska

At the request of Senator Stevens and me, the United States Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings visited Alaska in August. We visited with students, teachers, administrators and policymakers on a two-day trip across the State. Our trip included stops in Bethel, Nome, Shishmaref and Anchorage. Our goal was to share with Secretary Spellings some of the unique challenges in education delivery that we face in Alaska and to share with her the pride that we have in our students.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Administration's key education policy, is up for reauthorization in Congress this year. I have introduced legislation that will make changes to the law to address Alaska's needs. While NCLB has helped to bring about positive changes to school policies and procedures, and has ensured that more students are getting the help they need to succeed in schools, we also know that there are areas that can be improved.

Secretary Spellings had positive things to say about her experience in Alaska.

"In Alaska students are achieving results, and I am excited to continue the national dialogue on education and discuss ways to build on the progress being made and reach the goal of having all students read and do math on grade level by 2014," said Secretary Spellings. "I'm encouraged by the teachers, administrators, students and parents who have taken time to meet us on the road and engage in serious discussions about education in Alaska."



Left: Senator Murkowski and Secretary Spellings discuss NCLB at a press conference in Anchorage.

Right: Senator Murkowski visits with students at Nome Elementary School.

Senator Murkowski Helps Dedicate the Sherrod Elementary School Playground

Last year, students at Sherrod Elementary School in Palmer sent me letters inviting me to visit their new playground. They explained that their playground was special because it is shaped like the State of Alaska which helps them to learn while they play. I could not pass up an opportunity like that, and I was honored to be able to help dedicate the playground at a ceremony held on August 27.

For this playground project, the students drew pictures, wrote stories, and provided their unique insights into the plans for an outdoor learning environment. A committee made of a landscape architect, Mat-Su School District and Borough employees, teachers, parents, Native organizations (Dzuggi Pre-School program representing over 300 native families), a Borough assembly member, and a representative from the Borough Department of Parks and Recreation met weekly to plan for the project. The end result is a facility with which everyone can be proud.



Senator Murkowski speaks with Doug Chilton, a Tlingit artist from Juneau. Doug carved the totem pole that will be displayed in the Southeast area of the playground.

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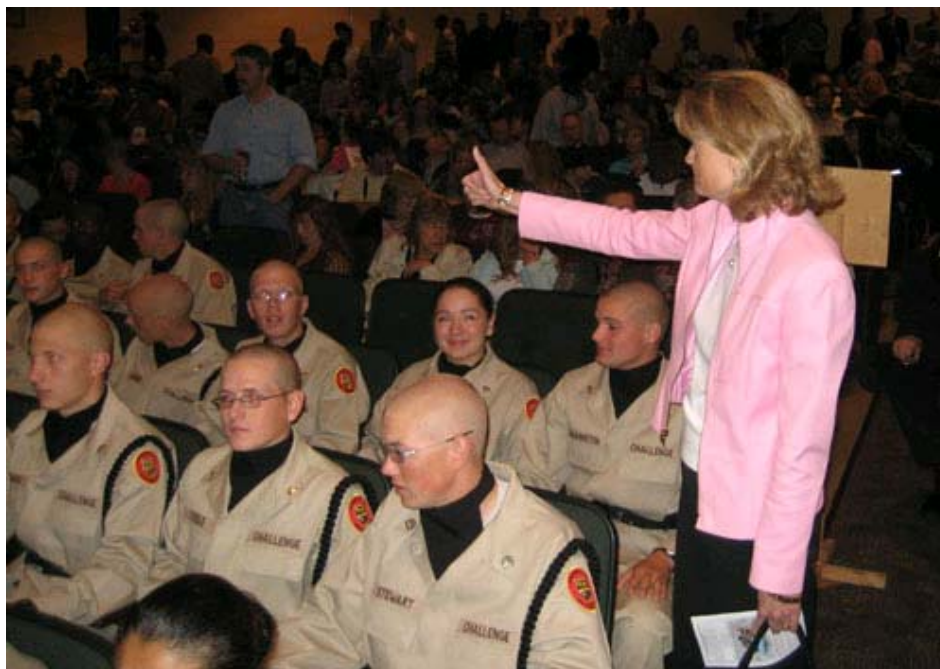
Senator Murkowski Speaks at the Alaska Youth Military Academy Graduation

I addressed cadets at the Alaska Military Youth Academy graduation ceremony on August 31. This commencement is truly one of my favorite events each year in the state. The program does an outstanding job of turning lives around and I could not be more proud of the cadets who graduate.

The Alaska Military Youth Academy's ChalleNGe Program is designed to meet the life coping skills and educational needs of 16 to 18 year old Alaskans. The Youth ChalleNGe program is a 22 week residential school based on the traditional military training model.

Cadets are instructed in the following areas: Life Coping Skills, Educational Excellence, Skills Training, Responsible Citizenship, Leadership/Followership, Health, Hygiene and Sex Education, Physical Fitness, and Community Involvement/Service Projects. In addition to these skills, cadets work toward the completion of a GED or High School Diploma.

I offer my warm congratulations to the recently graduated cadets and wish them well in their bright futures.



Senator Murkowski gives a "thumbs up" to graduating cadets.

For more information on the Alaska Youth Military Academy visit
<http://www.ngycp.org/state/ak>

Senator Murkowski Attends Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Spencer Whistle Stop

On August 16th, I attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Alaska Railroad's Spencer whistle stop. The whistle stop came about through a partnership between the Chugach National Forest and the Alaska Railroad to provide access to the spectacular backcountry of the Chugach National Forest between Anchorage and Seward. The completed project will include a series of five whistle stops with restrooms and other amenities where visitors can disembark the train to take a day or overnight trip into the heart of the Chugach National Forest.

The Spencer whistle stop is an experience unlike any other in the country. Thanks to the partnership between the Alaska Railroad and the Forest Service, residents and visitors in Alaska have yet another way to enjoy the marvelous scenery, wildlife and recreational opportunities of the Chugach.



Senators Murkowski, Stevens and Inouye (D-HI) listen to Chugach National Forest Supervisor Joe Meade discuss the advantages of the whistle stop program.

Murkowski Attends Renewable Energy Fair

Last year, to celebrate the grand opening of its geothermal power plant, Chena Hot Springs organized the 1st annual Chena Renewable Energy Fair. The fair included tours of all our renewable energy and sustainable development projects, along with workshops, vendor booths, and the official dedication of the geothermal power plant. 1400 people attended the inaugural event, along with 30 vendors and 25 presenters.

The tremendous feedback from last year's event encouraged the Resort to make the Renewable Energy Fair an annual event. This year, I joined hundreds of Alaskans at the fair to celebrate the opening of the first commercial hydrogen production facility in Alaska. Because the resort produces more electricity from the geothermal power plant than they can use onsite, and because the resort is not grid-connected to GVEA, they plan to use excess electricity to make hydrogen to use for fuel.

I congratulate Bernie Karl for his continued innovation. He is proving that we can be on the leading edge of renewable energy production in Alaska. To learn more visit <http://www.yourownpower.com>



Bernie Karl with Senators Murkowski, Stevens and Inouye at the dedication of Alaska's first hydrogen production facility.

Murkowski Attends Kwethluk Health Clinic Dedication

I was honored to join the community of Kwethluk on August 8 to help dedicate a new 3,200 square foot health clinic. This new clinic is a shining example of the spirit and determination that makes things happen in Alaska. The new facility has been dedicated to the blessed memory of Betty Guy, who partnered with Dr. Harriet Johnson to launch the "Radio Medical Traffic program" decades ago. That program was a forerunner of today's Community Health Aide program.



Senator Murkowski helps dedicate the new health clinic in Kwethluk.

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Midnight Sun Shootout Receives National Attention

I was proud to once again be a part of the Midnight Sun Shootout. The event, which is sponsored by the Friends of the NRA, helps raise money for hunter heritage, education and outdoor sports programs in Alaska. This year, the event drew national attention from ESPN which reported on it [here](#).

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



Congratulations to Lisa and Verne who celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary on August 22, the day before they sent their boys off to their junior and freshman year of high school.

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